



New Castle Crier

The official newsletter of New Castle City

Vol. 6, Iss. 10

New Castle, Delaware

October 2012

Fall Hydrant Flushing Program

The Municipal Services Commission (MSC) Water Department will begin its Fall Fire Hydrant Flushing Program on Monday, October 15. Flushing will begin at 7:30 a.m. and end at 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. The entire process takes approximately 10 business days to complete.

The Hydrant Flushing Program is important to the water system and is an integral part of the MSC's goal to deliver the safest and highest quality water possible. Additionally, it improves fire protection by testing the operation of hydrants.

The Municipal Services Commission schedules the flushing program during the late fall when demands are lower, using a carefully planned route to control the direction of flow in the system. Customers should not experience service interruptions during the flushing process.

The flushing process may cause some temporary water discoloration. There is no health hazard associated with the discolored water. If you notice discolored water, run several cold water taps at the same time until the water is clear. Avoid using hot water and doing laundry until you are sure the water is clear.

The Municipal Services Commission urges all residents to exercise caution while traveling around the hydrant flushing crews, as water may accumulate in the flushing area.

Your understanding and cooperation during this process is appreciated. If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact the Municipal Services Commission Water Department at 323-2333 between 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

**The
next regular
City Council meeting is 7 p.m.,
Tuesday, October 9
at Town Hall**

City tackles vacant property issues

The City has been working on a process to deal with dilapidated properties. Some are occupied by owners or tenants, however many are vacant. Obviously, the City Council is concerned about possible negative impacts such properties can have on City neighborhoods.

The Code Enforcement Officer spends a good deal of time addressing issues with these properties in residential areas. As a standard process, when violations of the City Code are occurring, the property owner is contacted and informed of the violation(s) and first given a time period during which it is hoped the property will voluntarily come into compliance.

Of course, there are a number of instances when this does not occur and more official and stringent methods are employed to compel compliance with City codes. Some matters go as far as having legal citations issued. These end up in court and then a judge decides on the outcome, in accordance with what is presented as evidence.

In some more extreme cases, the City will perform needed work on private properties, either with internal forces or hiring contractors. This can include mowing grass, trimming overgrown vegetation, boarding up broken windows, etc. In all these cases, the private property owner ultimately must reimburse the City for these expenses.

Invoices are sent to the owner and any which are not timely paid are placed as a lien on the property. In those cases, the City will recoup its money when the property is sold. Of course, this means the City has to wait a considerable period of time for a reimbursement.

Not surprisingly, many of the owners of these properties are delinquent in the payment of property taxes – which can include those for the City, County and School. Some are behind for a relatively short period of time and the amount owed is relatively small. Others, however, are delinquent for years and owe substantial sums in back taxes and penalties.

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New Castle – The First Capital City!

The most picturesque and historic waterfront community on the East Coast!

Vacant properties

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The City or the County can request the Sheriff's Office to sell the property so the municipality may collect overdue fees and taxes from the proceeds of the sale. Periodically, a Sheriff's Sale is scheduled and properties are sold at auction to the highest bidders.

The City has participated in this process in the past few years:

- 917 Gray Street was burned out in 1992. Through the Sheriff's Sale process, the property ultimately was transferred in ownership to a private owner. Renovations were completed, the City issued a Certificate of Occupancy and this is now a residential rental property.

- 7-1/2 Center Street was purchased by the City, renovated and currently serves as the Dobbinsville Police Substation.

- 7 Center Street was purchased by a private property owner and is currently being renovated. Plans are for this to become a mixture of residential and commercial uses.

- 19 Arbutus was purchased by the City at Sheriff's Sale and subsequently sold in a sealed bid process, in accordance with procedures detailed in the City Code. A private owner is currently demolishing the existing residential structure and plans to build a new, owner-occupied residential home.

- 708 Clark and 924 Young were recently purchased at Sheriff's Sale by the City. The City is exploring a

number of avenues, seeking a variety of potential partners to achieve renovations, with the ultimate goal of these becoming owner-occupied homes.

Where the City purchased the property, there were no other bidders and the City didn't want to start the process over again.

The City maintains a list of properties which are a concern and recently prioritized and selected six more properties to work on in earnest to proceed to Sheriff's Sale. The continuing goal is to have these properties rehabilitated and once again become vibrant family homes within the communities and neighborhoods in which they are located.

October Events

Saturday, October 13, 8 to 11:30 a.m.

New Castle Hundred Lions Club & Good Will Fire Co.

☉ Pancake Breakfast ☉

Fire Hall: 401 South St. ♦ All-You-Can-Eat \$6; 12/Under \$3

Advance Tickets available from Lions and/or Fire Co.

Members and also for Sale at the Door, or call 328-LION (5466). Take outs are available.

The Fire Company will be providing free smoke detectors in conjunction with Fire Prevention & Awareness Month.

Lions will be collecting used eye glasses and providing free vision screening for children ages four through six.

Saturday, October 13, 9 a.m. to Noon

Arasapha Garden Club

☉ Fall Perennial Plant Sale ☉

Visit us on the Market Street Green behind Town Hall and purchase wonderful plants at very reasonable prices. Proceeds will help maintain the City's historic gardens.

For more information go to Arasapha.org.

Sunday, October 14 ♦ New Castle Area Churches

☉ CROP Walk for Hunger ☉

Registration at Noon; Walk Starts at 1 p.m.

Location: New Castle UMC, 510 Delaware Street

For information call Joan Skilton at 658-9991 or email skiltonfamily@verizon.net ♦ www.churchworldservice.org/CROP

Saturday, October 20 ♦ New Castle Senior Center

☉ Harvest Bazaar ☉

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Senior Center at 400 South St.

Featuring homemade baked goods, handmade crafts, new sewing/craft supplies, books, new and gently used items, breakfast/lunch, raffles:

50/50 and tomboli, and more! Free admission!

Contact 326-4209 or info@newcastleseniorcenter.com

Saturday, October 20 ♦ Penn Farm Event

Bringing It All Home:

☉ Cultivating Sustainable Communities ☉

a conversation with Fred Kirschenmann, PhD.

Historic Penn Farm's 'Common Ground' Forum

Arsht Hall (University of Delaware, Wilmington Campus)

2600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Wilmington

1 to 3 p.m. ♦ Cost: \$15/\$8 Students

www.historicpennfarm.org ♦ 302-655-7275

Saturday, October 20 ♦ Penn Farm Event

☉ Celebration Hoedown ☉

7:30 'til midnight ♦ Tickets are \$10 at the Stand

Black Twig Pickers, Appalachian old-time band will bring

their banjos, fiddles, bones down to the Bank Barn at the

Historic Penn Farm, 807 Frenchtown Road, New Castle

Proceeds benefit future programming at Historic Penn Farm.

Saturday, October 27 ♦ Good Will Fire Co.

☉ Open House ☉

Noon to 3 p.m. at the Fire Hall at 401 South St.

Free hot-dogs, sodas & pretzels, NCC Medic Unit, NCC

Mounted Police, DEMA Display, Free 9v Batteries for Smoke

Detectors, Talking Radio-Controlled Fire Engine (for kids),

New Castle City Police Dept. Fingerprinting, Millcreek Fire Co.

Smoke House, Fire Marshall Juvenile Firesetter Display,

Office of Emergency Preparedness. ***Bring your camera!***

Tuesday, October 30 ♦ New Castle Hundred Lions Club

☉ Halloween Parade ☉

Line-up at St. Peter's at 6 p.m. ♦ Parade Starts 6:30 p.m.

Cash prizes awarded in a variety of categories including infants to adults, groups, funniest and scariest. Judging will take place in front of the Court House on Delaware Street.

Featured participants will be from the William Penn

High School and the Good Will Fire Company.

For additional information, call 328-LION(5466).